



Northern
Ireland
Office



Parades Commission for Northern Ireland

Appointment of Chair and Members

Candidate Information Pack

October 2023



FOREWORD FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying for a position on the board of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland.

We are seeking outstanding individuals who can make a real contribution to the Commission's ongoing work, and bring expertise to the complex decision making in the coming months and years. We welcome applications from all suitably experienced individuals regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability.

The enclosed information will, I hope, answer many of the questions you may have about the roles and work of the Commission. I will be looking to appoint individuals who can bring vision, influence, and innovation to the roles.

I hope that you will feel able to submit an application and, once again, thank you for your interest in these posts.

**THE RT HON CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland ('The Commission') is a public body operating as an executive non-departmental public body accountable through the Chair to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The powers and duties of the Commission are to be found in the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

Under the terms of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, the Commission is charged with promoting greater understanding by the general public of issues surrounding public processions, keeping itself generally informed as to the conduct of public processions and protest meetings, and promoting and facilitating mediation as a means of resolving disputes concerning public processions.

The Commission's functions also include keeping under review, and making such recommendations as it thinks fit to the Secretary of State concerning the operation of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

In fulfilling these functions, the Commission may facilitate mediation between parties to particular disputes concerning proposed public processions and take such other steps as appear to the Commission to be appropriate for resolving such disputes; and may issue determinations in respect of particular proposed public processions and protest meetings.

The Commission is supported and advised by a small secretariat that is mainly recruited from the civil service. The current Secretary is Sarah Teer. The secretariat provides advice and support to the Commission in exercising their duties.

If you would like more information on the Commission or the guidelines in which it operates you can access its website at www.paradescommission.org

The role

The Commission consists of a Chair and up to six members who are appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Commission is currently composed of a Chair and five members; the appointments of the Chair and four members will expire on 31 December 2023 and one further member position will expire on 31 March 2024. This competition will be used to fill these forthcoming vacancies and any other vacancies that arise within the next 12 months.

The Chair will work with the Secretary, who is the Commission's Accounting Officer, and the board members, to lead the Parades Commission in pursuit of its statutory duties and objectives. The Chair has a particular responsibility for leading and managing meetings of the Commission and corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Commission complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds.

Key responsibilities:

All Parades Commission members, including the Chair, will be expected to:

- Attend Commission meetings regularly;
- Act as representatives of the Commission as required e.g. at public meetings, events, seminars or other functions;
- Perform roles within the Commission e.g. chairing meetings in the absence of the chair;
- Ensure the Commission fulfils its functions in accordance with the statutory requirements;
- Assist the Chair in developing policy and in providing strategic direction for the Commission in the effective and efficient performance of its statutory duties;
- Accept corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Commission complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds;
- Assist the Chair in the application of an appropriate corporate governance regime;

- Apply personal expertise in contributing to the work of the Commission as a whole; and
- Ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies and the Seven Principles of Public Life.

In addition to the above requirements, the Chair has a particular responsibility for:

- Leading and chairing meetings of the Commission;
- Developing policy and providing strategic direction for the Commission in the effective and efficient performance of its statutory duties;
- Corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Commission complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public resources including acting in a way that promotes high standards of public finance, including the promotion of regularity, propriety and value for money;
- Ensuring that there is appropriate corporate governance regime; and
- Ensuring that all members are compliant with the Code of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies and the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Terms of appointment

- Meetings normally take place in Belfast but there may be an opportunity to carry out some duties remotely, subject to the business requirements of the Commission.
- The expected time commitment for the Chair position is approximately 1-2 days per week and for members the commitment is 1 day per week, but this is likely to increase to 2 or more days in the April to August period. Occasional evening and weekend meetings are likely.
- The position of Chair attracts a fixed annual remuneration of £50,000 and the member position receives a fixed annual remuneration of £22,000, this will be paid in equal monthly instalments. Travel and incidental expenses will be reimbursed at approved civil service rates for costs necessarily incurred on Parades Commission business. Home to office expenses will only be paid in

exceptional circumstances and with the prior approval of the Commission's Secretary.

- These are not pensionable positions.
- The appointment will be for a maximum period of up to three years.

Person Specification

Outstanding individuals are sought to become a member of the Commission; people who can command the confidence of all sides of the community in Northern Ireland, act in controversial situations and determine courses of action, and assess the probability of future events and make clear and well informed judgements.

Essential Skills

Candidates for this challenging role will need to demonstrate:

- The ability to take difficult but fair decisions in high profile and controversial circumstances;
- The ability to build relationships and broker consensus between senior stakeholders and opposing views; and
- The ability to demonstrate personal integrity, professional conduct and credibility, with an exceptional sense of propriety.

In addition, **candidates for the Chair role** need to be able to show a strong track record of leadership, and the ability to broker consensus between senior stakeholders and opposing views.

Conflicts of interest

In the interests of transparency and openness, applicants are asked to consider whether their appointment may give rise to a conflict of interest and state this clearly on the application summary form. You should provide information regarding interests that you, or your immediate family, have that might be construed as being in conflict with membership of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland.

An appointee to a public body could find that matters or incidents which previously attracted no attention could become matters of legitimate public interest once the person concerned holds a public appointment. Actual or perceived conflicts might include, for example, a situation where a candidate has interests in an organisation that might benefit from a contract with the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland or there may be issues in your personal or professional history (including any convictions or bankruptcy) that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to Ministers or the Commission or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised. It is important that you bring them to the attention of the Advisory Assessment Panel and provide details of the issue(s) in your application.

In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media and blogs. Due Diligence may be carried out on any publicly available information and shared with the Advisory Assessment Panel and Ministers. The panel may explore any issues you declare with you before they make a recommendation on the appointment.

A potential conflict will not necessarily preclude an individual from appointment but candidates must be prepared to have this explored during the recruitment process and before an appointment is confirmed.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

It is important that all public appointees uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Committee on Standards on Public Life's Seven Principles of Public Life. A copy of the principles is appended at Annex A.

How to apply

The appointment process will be conducted in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments and will be independently assessed.

The Northern Ireland Office is committed to the principle of public appointments on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process and to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, dependents, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

All applications received by the closing date will be acknowledged and put before a duly constituted Advisory Assessment Panel including an independent member. The Panel will in due course make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who may wish to meet all the appointable candidates.

Applications should be sent by email to PCNI2023@nio.gov.uk. If you have any issues emailing your applications, please contact 07973773903 for further assistance.

The closing date for applications is **Sunday 29 October 2023**. Applicants should provide:

- The application summary form, including a personal statement of no more than two pages summarising your proven ability related to the person and job specifications;
- Completed Equality and Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire; and
- A full CV (including education and professional qualifications, career history, and relevant achievements and responsibilities).

Process

Candidates selected at the shortlisting stage will be interviewed by the Advisory Assessment Panel in November. Interviews will take place remotely and candidates may be asked to give a short presentation.

If you require any further information about the application process you should contact the competition co-ordinator by email at PCNI2023@nio.gov.uk.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT - OFFERING AN INTERVIEW TO PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

As a Whitehall department the Northern Ireland Office has adopted the Department for Work and Pensions sponsored Disability Confident scheme, which has replaced the Guaranteed Interview Scheme or Two Ticks scheme that was widely used in Great Britain. Disability Confident is a voluntary scheme which supports the Government's commitment to halve the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people by encouraging employers to think differently about disability and to take positive action to improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers.

We will make reasonable adjustments to help you attend the interview. You may wish to contact the competition coordinator, by email or telephone (details above), about your individual requirements should your application proceed to this stage in the process.

We will also offer an interview to a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the job. By minimum criteria you must be able to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate relevant skills and experience for each of the selection criteria set out in the essential skills section. This does not mean that all disabled people are entitled to an interview.

The aim of this commitment is to encourage positive action for disabled people, encouraging them to apply for positions in public life by offering them the assurance that, should they meet the minimum criteria as advertised for the position, they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, talent and abilities at the interview stage.

It is important to note that in certain recruitment situations such as an urgent appointment or if we receive a higher volume of applications that far exceeds the number of those expected then we may need to limit the overall numbers of

interviews offered. This will include the number of interviews offered to disabled people that meet the minimum criteria for the job.

Complaints

If you feel that you have any complaints about any aspect of the way your application has been handled, we would like to hear from you. In the first instance please write, or e-mail, to the competition co-ordinator at the address above or e-mail: PCNI2023@nio.gov.uk

Complaints must be received by the competition coordinator within 1 calendar month from the issue or after the campaign has closed, whichever is the later. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt and answered as quickly and clearly as possible; at the most within 20 working days of receipt. If this deadline cannot be met we will inform you why this is the case and when you can expect a reply.

If, after receiving our response you are still not satisfied, you may contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates and monitors appointments to public bodies to ensure procedures are fair. Information about the Commissioner's policy and manner in which complaints are investigated are set out in the Commissioner's leaflet *Your Guide to Making a Complaint about a Public Appointments Process*. More information about the role of the Commissioner and contact information can be found at:

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>

Use of your personal information

Your personal information will be held in accordance with the data protection legislation. If you apply for a post, diversity data is not shared with the Advisory Assessment Panel. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail as a result of sending us any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes.

When we ask you for personal information, we promise we will:

- only ask for what we need, and not collect too much or irrelevant information
- ensure you know why we need it
- protect it and insofar as is possible, make sure nobody has access to it who shouldn't
- ensure you know what choice you have about giving us information
- make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised

We ask that you:

- give us accurate information
- tell us as soon as possible of any changes
- tell us as soon as possible if you notice mistakes in the information we hold about you

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates and monitors appointments to public bodies to ensure procedures are fair. We are required by the Commissioner for Public Appointments to retain information about the people who apply for public appointments within their remit, and make this information available to them for audit purposes, if requested to do so. Information you provide in your application may therefore be made available to the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Commissioner's auditors on a confidential basis in order to help fulfil the Commissioner's formal complaints investigation role and for audit purposes.

Our data protection policy is in line with the requirements set out in legislation and the Commissioner's Code of Practice. The Commissioner's requirements relating to the information we collect about applicants are set out below:

- Your initial contact details, including your name and address will be held by the Northern Ireland Office for a period of at least 2 years.
- If you submit an application form, the form and any supporting documentation will be retained for at least 2 years.

- Information held electronically, including your contact details and the monitoring information which you provide will also be held for at least 2 years.

If you would like these details to be removed from our records as soon as this recruitment exercise is complete, please inform the competition coordinator via the email address or postal address to which you sent your application.

We may also make information available to the Cabinet Office. Further details on how this will be handled can be found at:

<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/privacy-notice/>

MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE

This information is not used in the selection process. It will be removed on receipt and is not seen by the panel assessing your application. We use this information to monitor the diversity of candidates we attract and those we appoint.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The principles of public life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected for appointment to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, NDPBs and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public services. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

Selflessness Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity Holders of public office should not place themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour whenever it occurs.